

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 242582  
ORIGIN OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 /018 R

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 242582

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM GEORGETOWN DATED OCTOBER 2, 1977  
SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO BRIDGETOWN, CARACAS, KINGSTON,  
MEXICO, PANAMA, PARAMARIBO, PORT OF SPAIN IS REPEATED  
TO YOU: QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 2416

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS, PLOS, NS, KS

SUBJECT: GUYANA TO ENFORCE ITS TERRITORIAL SEA LIMIT IMMEDIATELY

REF: STATE 235874

BEGIN SUMMARY: GUYANA INTENDS TO ENFORCE ITS 200 MILE  
LIMIT EFFECTIVE "IMMEDIATELY." BURNHAM HAS INDICATED  
THAT FISHING VESSELS OPERATING WITHOUT COVER OF A LICENSE  
OF A BILATERAL AGREEMENT WILL BE SEIZED BEGINNING  
OCTOBER 4. LICENSE CAN BE OBTAINED FROM MINISTER OF  
AGRICULTURE BEGINNING OCTOBER 3. NO REGULATIONS HAVE  
BEEN PUBLISHED YET. END SUMMARY.

1. IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIPT OF REFTEL DCM ARRANGED MEETING  
OCTOBER 1 WITH FONMIN WILLS TO DISCUSS THE SEIZURE OF  
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KOREAN FISHING VESSELS AND ENFORCEMENT OF 200 MILE ZONE  
AND RAISED QUESTION CONCERNING TREATMENT OF US FLAG  
VESSELS. AFTER CALLING PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM, WILLS  
SAID THAT SEIZURE OF FOREIGN BASED TRAWLERS HAD BEEN  
INTENDED AS A WARNING TO SURINAM IN RETALIATION TO GOS  
SEIZURE OF GUYANESE VESSELS IN THE CORENTYNE RIVER WHICH  
GOG HAS REGARDED AS TRADITIONAL GUYANESE FISHING GROUNDS.

GUYANA'S REPRESENTATIONS TO GOS ON THIS ISSUE HAD NOT MET WITH SATISFACTORY RESPONSE. THE SOUTH KOREAN VESSELS WERE SEIZED BECAUSE THE POLITICAL IMPACT WOULD BE LESS THAN WOULD RESULT FROM SEIZURE OF VESSELS OF ANY OTHER COUNTRY.

2. WILLS CONVEYED TO DCM BURNHAM'S ASSURANCES THAT GOG WOULD INSTRUCT THE GUYANA DEFENSE FORCE NOT TO SEIZE US-FLAG VESSELS UNTIL AFTER GUYANA'S FISHING LAW HAD BEEN PUBLISHED AND ADEQUATE TIME GIVEN FOR OWNERS OF VESSELS TO OBTAIN LICENSES.

3. SHORTLY AFTER NOON OCTOBER 2, HOWEVER, BURNHAM CALLED IN DCM TO DISCUSS FISHING TRAWLER ISSUE. HE EXPLAINED THAT HE WOULD NOT HONOR ASSURANCES GIVEN ON PREVIOUS DAY. HE WAS UNDER PRESSURE TO APPLY LAW EQUALLY TO VESSELS OF ALL NATIONS. HE SAID SOUTH KOREANS ALREADY WERE CHARGING GOG WITH DISCRIMINATION. SOME OF THE TRAWLERS HAVE JAPANESE OWNERS OR CO-OWNERS. EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY ALL VESSELS FISHING IN GUYANA'S 200 MILE LIMIT WOULD HAVE TO COME UNDER BILATERAL FISHING AGREEMENTS OR HAVE LICENSES. WHEN REMINDED THAT NO NOTICE HAD BEEN GIVEN THAT GUYANA INTENDED TO ENFORCE ITS 200 MILE AUTHORITY, BURNHAM SAID THAT REGULATIONS WOULD BE ISSUED WITHIN THE WEEK. AFTER DISCUSSION OF DIFFICULTIES THIS WOULD IMPOSE ON VESSELS, BURNHAM SAID THAT THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE COULD RECEIVE APPLICATIONS BEGINNING TOMORROW, OCTOBER 3.  
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BURNHAM SAID THAT THE PRICE OF LISENSSES HAD NOT YET BEEN DETERMINED. DCM INFORMED HIM OF POSSIBLE DIFFICULTIES IN US-GUYANA RELATIONS SHOULD SEIZURES OF US FLAG VESSELS OCCUR.

4. SUBSEQUENTLY, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE CONFIRMED THAT HE WOULD RECEIVE APPLICATIONS FOR LICENSES BEGINNING OCTOBER 3. HE ESTIMATED THAT ISSUANCE OF LICENSES COULD BE COMPLETED WITHIN 48 HOURS FROM TIME OF RECEIPT OF APPLICATION. HE WAS NOT CERTAIN WHAT THE COST OF A LICENSE WOULD BE BUT "GUESSED" THAT EACH LICENSE MIGHT COST ABOUT G\$3,000 (APPROX. US\$1,200). HE DID NOT ANTICIPATE THAT THERE WOULD BE CATCH LIMITS OR CLOSED SEASONS (THIS CONTRADICTS INFORMATION EMBASSY PREVIOUSLY HAD OBTAINED FROM OTHER OFFICIALS. WE WILL BE IN CONTINUING TOUCH WITH MINAG TO OBTAIN PRECISE DETAILS REGARDING THE FILING OF APPLICATIONS.)

5. FONMIN WILLS SUBSEQUENTLY SAID TO EMBASSY THAT HE WOULD TRY TO PERSUADE BURNHAM TO EXTEND THE TIME LIMIT FOR OBTAINING LICENSES.

6. ACTION REQUESTED. DEPARTMENT PLEASE ADVISE US

FIRMS THAT EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 4 THEIR VESSELS FISHING IN  
GUYANESE 200 MILE TERRITORIAL SEAS WILL BE SUBJECT TO  
SEIZURE IF THEY DO NOT HAVE LICENSES. CAPTAINS OF  
VESSELS WILL BE FINED, CATCHES SOLD AND SHIPS WILL BE  
SOLD AT AUCTION.  
BURKE UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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## Message Attributes

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